DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 279 415 PS 016 364

AUTHOR Thompson, Virginia L.; Molnar, Janice
TITLE Universally-Available Educational Programs for Four-Year-Olds: An Issue of Policy.
PUB DATE Nov 86
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Washington, DC, November 13-16, 1986).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Day Care; Demography; Disadvantaged Youth; Early Childhood Education; *Educational Innovation; Policy Formation; *Preschool Children; *Preschool Education; Program Effectiveness; *Program Implementation; *Public Policy; Public Schools; Social History
IDENTIFIERS *New York (New York); Project Head Start

ABSTRACT

In 1985, Edward Koch, Mayor of New York City, established an Early Childhood Education Commission and gave it the task of recommending how best to begin to provide public education for all of the city's 4-year-olds, beginning in September, 1986. After introductory remarks indicating the confluence and interplay of social elements underpinning the Mayor's action, this paper (1) provides a review of the historical roots of New York City's day care, Head Start, and public school prekindergarten programs; (2) describes recent initiatives in providing early childhood education; (3) briefly reports research findings concerning the effects of early childhood programs, giving particular attention to studies conducted in New York City; (4) reports on the Commission's review of demographic data related to the city's population of 4-year-olds; (5) discusses the Commission's review of existing programs, attending specifically to the large number of economically disadvantaged children who remained unserved by public programs; (6) presents and discusses the 10 recommendations the Commission made to the Mayor; (7) describes the status of efforts to implement the recommendations; and (8) identifies policy issues facing the city's implementation efforts. It is concluded that whether or not the Commission's plan will be fully realized is a matter of policy. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED279415

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

UNIVERSALLY-AVAILABLE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLDS: AN ISSUE OF POLICY

Virginia L. Thompson

Queens College--City University of New York

Janice Molnar

Bank Street College of Education

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Janice Molnar

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PS 016364

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, D.C., November, 1986. Requests for copies should be addressed to: Dr. Janice Molnar, Bank Street College of Education, Division of Research, 610 W. 112th Street, New York, NY 10025.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INTRODUCTION

The 1980s have seen increasing interest in early childhood education. As the trend towards expanding the availability of programs for this age cohort increases, there is a need to examine some of the accompanying policy issues.

For many of us, there is a mystical aura about the domain of policy setting. This is a domain, so our thinking goes, set aside for the privileged few theoreticians, politicians, administrators or a few favored citizens. In all too many instances, of course, this is true. However, we, too, are active participants on the forefront of major policy shifts. Witness the large attendance at this conference.

How are interests organized in our society to move toward policy shifts? One dominant model of public policy formation states that policy making is a process of social choice. Rational policy choices derive from policy analyses which select from among available courses of action those which maximize social benefits and minimize social costs. Policy making, in this definition, is conceived as a technical and rational process occurring within a political context. There are those who disagree with this position--policy analysis is more frequently a rationalization of political interests, not a rational choice.

Another set of interpretations stresses a more linear mode of policy formation consisting of: the description of social problems, the passage of appropriate legislation or budget allocations and the design and implementation of government programs. Public policy, under this definition, represents the

formalization of a very complex process of constructing ideas: identification of problems, descriptions of "what is", discussions of "what should be" and formulation of possible actions.

Other theories are constructed on the belief that public opinion is the most essential stimulus and that political movements usually form coalitions with some established interest group or through elected officials hopping on the bandwagon of a movement during its initial flurry of interest.

Still other analysts insist that major policy shifts result because governments themselves have the power to generate political agenda items. There is an increasing core of officials with scientific, technical or professional training who, with lobbyists and other colleagues, build their own demand for programs in which they have an interest and are themselves knowledgeable.

Another more eclectic interpretation suggests that the time for policy shifts is determined by the confluence and interplay of an infinitely large number of elements in the social settings. There are times in history when ideas are in good currency--when social and demographic conditions, available research and public awareness converge--and at those times, it is easier to set new directions.

Such was the case when, in his 1985 State of the City address, New York City Mayor Edward I. Koch joined the growing ranks of politicians advocating for increased availability of programs for young children. Three major influences had

converged: the increasing numbers of women with young children entering the labor force and the corresponding need for day care; the heightened pressure for education at an early age; and, the research documenting the long-term benefits of quality early childhood programs. These national trends are replicated in New York City. Also found in New York City are numerous historical precedents for public support of early childhood programs.

HISTORICAL ROOTS IN DAY CARE, HEAD START AND PUBLIC SCHOOL PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

In New York City, public support for early childhood programs began during the Depression when President Franklin D. Roosevelt, as part of his New Deal, created the Works Progress Administration (WPA). WPA nursery schools were established to furnish jobs for unemployed teachers, social workers, health care workers and cooks, as well as to provide education and social services to poor children and their families. In 1938, there were 14 WPA nursery schools in New York City located in a variety of sites, including settlement houses, public housing spaces and even a vocational high school. Federal WPA support continued until 1943.

It was, however, the efforts of Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia that stimulated what was to be long-term public support for day care in New York City. With the entry of the United States into World War II and the demand for women to work in the war-related industries, the need for day care intensified. At the same time, however, WPA funds were due to expire and New York City, because

it was not designated a "war-impacted" area, was ineligible for federal Lanham Act dollars. (The Lanham Act, passed in 1941, provided federal support for the establishment of day care centers in specified areas.) As a response to public pressure from working women, Mayor LaGuardia negotiated an agreement whereby the City and the State would each contribute one-third of the operating costs of some of the City's WPA nursery schools, with local sponsoring agencies and parents contributing the remaining funds. The Mayor placed the administration of the programs within the Welfare Department; the individual agencies continued program sponsorship. In New York, this arrangement of government support of private-sector programs continues today.

The system remained fairly stable from the mid-1940s until the 1960s, when President Lyndon Johnson announced his War on Poverty. In New York City, as elsewhere, Head Start was one of the most visible and enduring of the anti-poverty programs. Head Start began in New York City in 1965 as a half-day program for 6,000 four- and five-year-olds. In 1967, after fluctuations in funding and the closing of some programs because of unsatisfactory federal reviews, New York City was able to offer full-year Head Start programs.

The Board of Education also drew from federal anti-poverty funds--the Economic Opportunity and Civil Rights Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act--to offer preschool classes. In 1964, the Board opened 65 prekindergarten classes for economically disadvantaged children in 24 elementary school and 30 preschool classes in 10 schools specifically established

to provide enriched elementary curricula. By 1966, the Board, with federal and City tax-levy funds, had established over 200 public school preschool classes. Additional funds from New York State's Experimental Prekindergarten Program allowed the Board to open 50 of these prekindergartens in 1967.

Publicly-funded day care also saw a similarly dramatic expansion. In 1967, Congress amended the Social Security act to permit Title IV-A and Title IV-B monies to be granted to the states on a three-to-one matching basis. Uncapped on the federal level, these funds were limited only by the ability of the state and local governments to make up a 25 percent match. Between 1967 and 1972, the New York City Human Resources Administration contracted with community-based organizations to open up hundreds of new day care centers. Citywide, public funding for day care grew during that period from $7 million to $170 million annually. In the midst of this rapid and uncoordinated expansion of day care facilities, Mayor John Lindsay created the Agency for Child Development (ACD) to administer publicly-funded day care and Head Start.

Unlimited expansion, however, came to a halt in the 1970s when the 1972 Federal Revenue Sharing Act put a cap on the amount of Social Security funds available for day care programs, and New York City's fiscal crisis in 1975 forced public early childhood programs of all types into competition with other City services, such as police and fire protection, for drastically reduced funds.

RECENT INITIATIVES. After a decade's hiatus, early childhood education is again capturing public attention. In 1983, the Board of Education implemented citywide all-day kindergarten, just four months after then Chancellor Anthony Alvarado announced the program as an educational priority. More than 56,000 children enrolled in the program in its first year. Enrollment is now over 60,000.

In July, 1985 Mayor Koch formally appointed a 12-member commission to recommend to him how best to phase in public education for all four-year-olds beginning in September, 1986. The Mayor's charge was stimulated by a number of converging factors. Key among them was his growing concern about the patterns of failure exhibited in the public schools which are manifested by the ever-increasing enrollments of children in special education and an unacceptably high dropout rate of 45 percent in the City's high schools. These facts were accompanied by a realization that remedial efforts are insufficient--the trajectory of children's later achievement is established early. In the public schools, for example, 60 percent of all children enrolled in special education are referred by the end of third grade.

A move toward the establishment of universal preschool education as a solution was likewise consistent with a nationally renewed interest in early childhood and, specific to New York State, a long-term effort by Education Commissioner Gordon Ambach to make public school pre-kindergarten universally available through the State.

RESEARCH ON EFFECTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

There was also an expanding body of research showing the long-term positive benefits of a high quality early childhood experience. The Mayor was particularly struck by what was, in January, 1985, the recently released High/ Scope follow-up of former low-income participants in the Perry Preschool Project (Berrueta-Clement et al., 1984). At age 19, young adults who had been exposed to a high-quality preschool program were less likely to be referred to special education during their school years, more likely to graduate from high school and to enroll in post-secondary education, more likely to be employed, and less likely to be arrested or to be on welfare than a comparable group of young people who had not attended such a program.

The Perry Preschool Project is not alone in demonstrating dramatic effects over the long term. The Consortium for Longitudinal Studies, based at Cornell University, conducted a collaborative follow-up of low-income children who had participated in any of 11 different early intervention programs begun in the late 1960s or early 1970s. The Consortium also documented reduced rates of assignment to special education, reduced rates of retention in grade, and higher graduation rates for students who had attended a high-quality early childhood program (Consortium for Longitudinal Studies, 1983; Lazar and Darlington, 1982).

NEW YORK CITY STUDIES. The applicability of research findings to New York City has countered criticisms that the

results of richly-funded, carefully controlled model projects are not generalizable, and so, are irrelevant to policy makers in real-world settings. In fact, two of the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies' projects were New York City based: the Harlem study, directed by Francis Palmer of the Harlem Research Center and the Institute for Developmental Studies Program, directed by Martin and Cynthia Deutsch of New York University.

Less well known is the 1973 study conducted by the Day Care Council of New York (Dill, 1973), which documented the progress through the third grade of low-income black children from central Brooklyn with and without preschool backgrounds. Those children who had the benefit of a preschool experience were more likely to be enrolled in classes of higher-achieving students during all three grades, to receive more positive teacher comments and to read at grade level than children who had not. More recently, a study conducted by the New York City Public Schools suggested that preschool experience has a significant positive impact on school-readiness skills in kindergarten.

THE CONTEXT OF THE FOUR-YEAR-OLD IN NEW YORK CITY

As a fact-finding body, the Mayor's Early Childhood Education Commission needed to place four-year-olds and their needs within a social and educational context. This was accomplished through gathering testimony from early childhood experts, government officials, and members of the public as well as by conducting its own reviews of research, demographics, and available programs.

DEMOGRAPHIC REVIEW. Throughout the course of its work, the Commission became increasingly convinced of the need for universally-available programs. The review of demographics was particularly informative. The Commission found that New York City's four-year-old population presents a challenging array of social and economic situations. According to the Commission's extrapolation of available data (1980 Census data, City of New York Department of City Planning documents and previous demographic reviews) there are 100,000 four-year-olds in New York City. Within the context of an overall decline in the child population in the City, are ever-increasing numbers of minority children, especially children for whom English is not their first language. Almost two-thirds of New York's four-year-olds are minority--Hispanic, Black or Asian. At least 43,000 (possibly as many as 53,000) live in families where English is not spoken at home. Geographically, four-year-olds are clustered unevenly throughout the City.

Poverty is an especially striking characteristic of New York City's young. Over one-third (34,000) of the City's four-year-olds live in families who are recipients of public assistance or whose income is below the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Poverty--like minority racial and ethnic status--tends to be concentrated in specific areas of the City, particularly the northern districts of Manhattan, the West Bronx, and parts of Brooklyn. An additional 26,000 children live in families with incomes at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines--"families

with somewhat higher income but where financial stress continues to be a factor affecting family life" (Early Childhood Education Commission, p. 82).

Many of New York City's young children live in female-headed households. In 1980, almost one-third of all families with children were single-parent, female-headed households. Almost half of them include children under the age of six. Many of these, in turn, were poor. Sixty-eight percent of single mothers with children under six lived below poverty.

Many four-year-olds in New York City have working mothers. It is estimated that 40 percent of mothers with children under six are working--lower than national figures but significant nonetheless.

EXISTING PROGRAMS. The Commission reviewed the enrollments, histories, administrative structures, funding sources and program guidelines of the three public systems that provide educational programs for four-year-olds in New York City--public school prekindergarten, Head Start and publicly-funded day care. The Board of Education, through the community school districts, administers the public school programs. The programs are generally half-day sessions supported primarily by State Education dollars. During the 1985-86 school year, 24 of the 32 community school districts operated pre-kindergarten programs. In total, they enrolled approximately 5,300 children.

Head Start and publicly-funded day care are administered by the Agency for Child Development (ACD) within New York City's Human Resources Administration. Both programs are delivered by

not-for-profit community-based agencies, governed by individual boards which contract with ACD to provide services. The Federal Head Start program, funded almost entirely with Federal dollars, is primarily a half-day program designed to provide compensatory education and health and social services to 7,300 disadvantaged children--virtually all of whom live below poverty.

The primary goal of ACD day care is to help families maintain or obtain employment. Funded by a combination of Federal, State and City social service dollars, ACD day care provides a 10-hour per day, 250 days a year program to an estimated 10,000 four-year-olds. Families must meet both social and financial eligibility criteria. In most cases, parents must be employed, in training, or looking for work. It is estimated that approximately 65 percent of ACD's total day care population is from families with incomes close to the poverty level.

In addition to the 22,600 four-year-olds enrolled in publicly-funded education programs, New York City's Department of Parks and Recreation offers a recreational preschool program to approximately 1200 four-year-olds.

Estimates of four-year-olds enrolled in private programs were harder to derive. Using both Census data and the results of a Commission survey of private licensed programs in New York City, the Commission estimated that 24,500, or close to one-quarter of all four-year-olds were in private day care in New York City, 6,000 of them in unlicensed programs.

UNSERVED FOUR-YEAR-OLDS. Combined, all systems--including unlicensed day care--were estimated to serve 48 percent of the

City's 100,000 four-year-olds. If only the publicly-funded educational programs and private licensed programs are included (excluding Parks Department programs and unlicensed private programs), there remained 59,000 four-year-olds who receive no formal preschool education.

Moreover, many of the unserved are poor. Even though almost three-quarters of the four-year-olds enrolled in publicly-funded preschool programs are from poor families, public programs do not serve even half of New York City's 34,000 economically-disadvantaged four-year-olds. Approximately 17,700 children in poverty are eligible for, but receive no publicly-funded preschool experience. Many others are in families with higher incomes which, although lacking eligibility for the public programs, cannot afford the luxury of sending their children to a private program. Together, these data suggested major gaps in availability of preschool educational programs for thousands of New York City's four-year-olds.

THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission issued its formal report, Take a Giant Step: An Equal Start in Education for All New York City Four-Year-Olds, in March 1986. The report was based on ten recommendations which provided a blueprint for implementing the Mayor's proposal for universal preschool education for four-year-olds.

RECOMMENDATION ONE:

> Publicly-supported early childhood education programs should be extended to assure universal availability to four-year-olds in New York City.

The Commission's core recommendation, a re-affirmation of Mayor Koch's original proposal, was justified in two ways. First, because of the distribution of New York City's four-year-olds across income groups, and because the majority of the City's middle- and upper-income four-year-olds are already enrolled in preschool programs, "providing universally-available publicly-funded educational programs for four-year-olds is the functional equivalent of providing equal opportunity of access to such programs" (Early Childhood Education Commission, p. 22). Second, since it is the economically disadvantaged and educationally at-risk children who are least likely to be enrolled in preschool, in cost-benefit terms the proposed expansion was viewed as highly cost effective, costing far less per child per year ($2,750) than either holding a student back ($3,000 per year), or assigning a student to special education ($2,000 - $5,000 per year).

RECOMMENDATION TWO:

> Extending publicly-funded programs to assure access by all four-year-olds should be accomplished by a four-year phase-in plan which first targets those neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of four-year-olds at educational risk.

The Commission projected that 40,000 four-year-olds--the majority poor or near-poor--would enroll in publicly-funded programs if they were available. Taking into account the organizational requirements of such an expansion (i.e., staffing and space shortages), the Commission proposed an expansion by increments of 10,000 children per year over a four year period.

Such a strategy means that some children would be served before others. The Commission, therefore, called for universal

availability within targeted areas designated as containing the highest proportions of four-year-olds who are (1) unserved in publicly-funded programs, (2) economically at or just above the poverty level, and (3) from homes where English is not spoken.

RECOMMENDATION THREE:

> Expanding publicly-funded programs for four-year-olds should build upon the two existing administrative structures--the Agency for Child Development and the Board of Education--and their delivery systems--the community-based organizations which provide Day Care and Head Start programs and the community school districts which operate school-based pre-kindergarten programs.

There was a three-pronged rationale for the Commission's recommendation to build on existing systems. First, the Commission concluded that building on the capacities and experiences of the three existing public delivery systems offered more advantages (i.e., access to space, training and supervisory capacity, ongoing community relationships, etc.) than any other alternative. Second, the Commission believed that it was essential to both maintain and expand program options for parents. Third, use of the existing systems would allow for the development of a potentially stronger and more flexible funding mechanism.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR:

> A Mayorally-appointed office should be created to coordinate, facilitate and oversee the expansion of existing publicly-funded programs for four-year-olds, utilizing the existing administrative structures and their program delivery systems.

A central office with overall responsibility for the expanded program was deemed essential for ensuring interagency cooperation; coordinated planning, staff development, evaluation

and research; the development of uniform program guidelines; and collaborative relationships with other levels of government. For example, one of the first activities of such an office might be to select the targeted areas for initial expansion and to coordinate competition among agencies and sites through a grant mechanism.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE:

The expansion of early childhood education programs for four-year-olds should be done with strict adherence to program guidelines that specify minimum standards in nine critical areas.

RECOMMENDATION SIX:

A comprehensive strategy should be developed for recruiting, training and retaining a pool of qualified staff for the expanded educational programs for four-year-olds.

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN:

An exhaustive search for space which meets the New York City Health Code Regulations should be conducted by the relevant City agencies and coordinated by the Mayoral Office. A special fund should be created for necessary renovation and construction.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT:

A systematic plan for monitoring, evaluation and research should be developed to assure that standards of quality and maximum accountability are maintained.

Recommendation Five encompasses Recommendations Six through Eight. The Commission was concerned that positive long-term benefits for children results only when programs are of high quality. Recommendation Five specifies nine elements that the Commission identified as essential components of high quality programs:

-- A well-developed curriculum supporting cognitive, social, emotional and physical development in an age-

appropriate manner;

-- Class size of no more than 20 children with two adults;

-- Teachers and assistant teachers with early childhood experience and training and access to strong staff development services;

-- Indoor and outdoor space of adequate dimensions, furnished with proper play equipment;

-- Availability of social services;

-- Parent involvement;

-- Provision of nutritious food, at least one meal and one snack each day;

-- Health, vision, hearing and dental screening and referral to direct health care;

-- Systematic monitoring and evaluation.

These elements were taken from the existing programs' own guidelines and model guidelines as specified, for example, in the National Association for the Education of Young Children's position statement on developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs (1986) and the National Academy of Early Childhood Program's Accreditation Criteria and Procedures (1984), and reviews of relevant research. Their importance was confirmed over and over again in testimony to the Commission made by early childhood educators, advocates, parents and research experts. Visits to the programs themselves supported their applicability and appropriateness across program type. Good programs all looked the same--in spite of differences in specificity of guidelines or bureaucratic organization.

Recommendations Six, Seven and Eight are elaborations of three of the elements contained in Recommendation Five.

RECOMMENDATION NINE:

Locally-based early childhood centers should be established to assure coordination of services and resource exchange at the local level, thus minimizing costly duplication and increasing cost-effectiveness.

The development of locally-based Early Childhood Centers was viewed as an effective mechanism through which to coordinate activities and services, and exchange ideas and experience. Examples of anticipated activities included coordinated staff development and training, coordinated resource and referral systems for parents and collaborative projects of local interest such as an after-school program.

RECOMMENDATION TEN:

A fiscal strategy should be developed whereby the City is initiator of the expanded educational programs for four-year-olds, but where all three governmental agencies--City, State and federal--share in the full responsibility for assuring universal availability.

The Commission contended that the risks associated with waiting for State or Federal contributions before going ahead with the preschool expansion made it incumbent upon the City to fully finance new slots in the first and succeeding years as it negotiated with other levels of government to partially fund the continuation costs in subsequent years.

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Fiscal issues initially dominated implementation of the Commission's recommendations. When the Commission issued its report, the public reception was enthusiastic but the City's official response was considerably more subdued. Federal budget cuts brought about by the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction

act made the City's Office of Management and Budget extremely reluctant to fund any new initiatives.

Mayor Koch endorsed the Commission's recommendations in principle but, citing fiscal constraints, called for a significantly more modest expansion--3,000 new slots in the first year, as compared to the 10,000 recommended by the Commission, at a cost of $8 million, compared to the $39 million budgeted by the Commission. But even the smaller $8 million pricetag did not make it smoothly through the protracted June budget negotiations. Whereas the Board of Estimate supported the program, the City Council did not, and until final passage the initiative's inclusion in the City budget was uncertain.

Program expansion began this fall. In late summer, the Board of Education and ACD issued requests for proposals to school districts and community based organizations, respectively, in targeted areas of the City with high need for expanded preschool services. Because of the limited number of new slots, eligibility was not universal within targeted areas. Instead, families had to meet certain indicators of financial need, e.g., income eligibility for free or reduced price school lunch, as determined by the guidelines for the National School Lunch Program. (In cases where numbers of eligible children applying for enrollment exceeded available slots, children were to be chosen by lottery.)

Start-up was not simultaneous across both systems, although the new slots were split equally between them. After a month of pre-service staff development, the Board of Education's programs

began at the end of October for close to 1,500 children in schools in upper Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx. Also following a month of pre-service staff training, ACD programs are scheduled to begin in February 1987 for an additional 1,500 children in centers in upper Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Jamaica in Queens.

POLICY ISSUES

As interest in expanding the availability of prekindergarten programs grows, there is a range of policy issues which need to undergo continuous scrutiny. An examination of the implementation of the Early Childhood Education Commission's recommendations highlights several critical issues.

The first major policy issue was the source of funding for the new programs. Current programs were (and continue to be) supported by a combination of City, State and federal funds. However, the Commission recommended that the City not wait until additional funds were forthcoming to began expansion of programs for all four-year-olds. As indicated earlier, the first major impediments to implementation were because of budget difficulties. The future of the expansion effort still rests, to a large extent, in the hands of those who set policy through the allocation of monies.

A second major issue facing the City's implementation efforts is closely related to the first. If resources for expansion are limited, who should be eligible for the programs? The Commission strongly recommended that the programs be available for all four-year-olds who reside in the geographic

areas where the programs are located. The social policy issue which drove the recommendation for universal availability was one of equity--the functional equivalent of providing equal opportunity for all children. However, because monies were limited, the City made a decision to once again use income-eligibility guidelines, which by definition, restrict access. In New York City, the policy issue remains one of how to expand the program so that all children can ultimately be served. Only rarely are issues of coordination and continuity addressed directly by policy makers at the City or State level. As has been pointed out, publicly-supported preschool programs are administered by ACD and the Board of Education. In this context, continuity refers to the establishment of connections between children's pre-school experiences and later schooling. When programs are under different sponsorship, at issue are concerns over protection of resources, standards and locus of control. This makes continuity of the learning experience for children more difficult to achieve. The challenge for the Mayor's newly established Office of Early Childhood Education is to ensure that, while protecting the interests of each agency, critical linkages are built between them, providing for an integrated, consistent plan for educating young children.

New York City's Early Childhood Education Commission outlined a bold plan for making educational programs available for all four-year-olds. The issues have been identified; initial steps have been taken toward implementation. Whether or not the plan will be fully realized is a matter of policy.

REFERENCES

Berrueta-Clement, J. R.; Schweinhart, L. J.; Barnett, W.S.; Epstein, A. S.; and Weikart, D. P. (1984). Changed lives: The effects of the Perry Preschool Program on youths through age 19. Monographs of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 8.

Consortium for Longitudinal Studies (1983). As the twig is bent...lasting effects of preschool programs. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Dill, J. R. (1973). A study of the comparative school achievement of day care graduates. New York, NY: Day Care Council.

Early Childhood Education Commission (1986, March). Take a giant step: An equal start for all New York City four-year-olds. New York, NY: Office of the Mayor. [250 Broadway, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10007]

Lazar, I., and Darlington, R. (1982). Lasting effects of early education: A report from the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies. Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 47(Serial Nos. 2-3).

National Association for the Education of Young Children (1986). NAEYC position statement on developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8. Young Children, 41(6), 4-19.

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (1984). Accreditation criteria and procedures: Position statement of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.